

18 Dec '96

Dear Frances,

This is to arrive I expect after Xmas in the period when there isn't much in the mail & everyone is just thankful Christmas is all over. I do hope you've had a very happy time doing exactly what you want to do. From your map, I think you can take some quite nice walks.

Last week Maria & I went to the big do put on by the Linden Singers - I think I told you about that. It was a real blast-off of hearty Christmas carols.

Tomorrow I have a little lunch party at the Ogden Point Café (our new restaurant at the Breakwater) & then a Christmas Eve Maria & I are off together to the Midnight Service at St. John's. Those are my only calendar events this year which is a good thing as I have picked up a cold & am working hard to throw it off.

Mamma gets rather sad at this time of year, a common state of affairs with older people, & he has lived through some pretty awful events not of his own making. I'm going to arrange two little coffee parties

events (one person at a time) to liven things up.

Goodacre Towers is busy redecorating all the passage ways & the lobby - all long over-due. They are making a very nice job of it & I do hope people won't start kicking it around & gumming up notices on it. Our apartment looks really quite festive with a table-lid of cards, our little electric tree (which operates on ^{one} night-light bulbs) & my big jorum of salad hung with Christmas baubles.

There was a meeting recently of the Hallmark Society, but they muddled the date. My friend Muriel & I went on the wrong date & found the place locked, & by the time the correct date came my cold was in full bloom & Muriel couldn't go. The Hallmark Society seems to be in a bit of a doldrums

but I am just a very small fish
& don't really know why.

I've been reading a biography of
Raisa Gorbachev (not awfully well
written). Their downfall has been so
complete & they will probably never
go back to Russia.

I found time to browse through
our Conference Centre lobby where
the Victoria merchants ^{& organizations} have
all decorated Christmas trees
according to their own business.

The Capital Iron Co. (a big iron monger)
has a very ingenious tree all
fixed up with things you might
buy there - tape measures,
oil cans, flash lites, etc, and the
Air B.C. tree is fixed up with
tickets, coffee cups & candies.

They do this every year & it is
always fun to see them.

We are all very horrified by
the shooting in Chechnya & the
Red Cross workers. One of the
was a Canadian, from Vancouver,

a perfectly splendid person,
+ it appears to be such a
senseless thing to have done.
We get a BBC program "Songs of
Praise" on Sundays - all rather
older tapings from previous years but
new to us. Last Sunday we had a
lovely, Christmassy one from Brighton
with carols interspersed with a
curator of the Sussex Toy Museum,
+ someone who sang delightful old
Victorian songs, plus a family of
real Sussex folk who sang a
marvellous version of "While
Shepherds Watched --" When these
sort of things come on you've no
idea how nostalgic I get for
Sussex, but I know if I were
to be living there now I would
be constantly pining for Victoria!
And now I would like to hear that
your face is recovering + that
your legs are much better, + that
you have been able to enjoy a
restful Christmas. Good wishes
to us both, + love from Jane.